

MEETING NOTES

NAME OF GROUP: NEBRASKA CAPITOL ENVIRONS COMMISSION

DATE, TIME AND PLACE OF MEETING: Thursday, June 22, 2017, 8:00 a.m., Conference Room 210, Lincoln, Nebraska.

MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE: Mary Campbell, Gene Crump, Christie Dionisopoulos, Karen Nalow, Ann Post and Jeff Searcy; (John Sinclair absent).

OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE: Ed Zimmer, Stacey Hageman and Teresa McKinstry of the Planning Department; Robert Ripley and Matt Hansen from the Office of the Capitol Commission; Lynn Johnson and J.J. Yost of Parks and Recreation; Mike Smith and Jamison Wyatt with the Mari Sandoz Heritage Society.

STATED PURPOSE OF MEETING: Nebraska Capitol Environs Commission Meeting

Chair Jeff Searcy called the meeting to order and acknowledged the posting of the Open Meetings Act in the room.

Searcy then called for a motion approving the minutes of the meeting held April 27, 2017. Motion for approval made by Campbell, seconded by Dionisopoulos and carried 5-0: Campbell, Crump, Dionisopoulos, Nalow and Searcy voting 'yes'; Post abstaining; Sinclair absent.

Ed Zimmer acknowledged new Commissioner Ann Post. Post introduced herself. She is an attorney with Baylor Evnen. She has been there for about one year now. She has a wonderful young family. She is excited to be a part of this commission. The other Commissioners introduced themselves.

A CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS FOR WORK IN THE PUBLIC RIGHT-OF-WAY OF LINCOLN MALL, NORTH SIDE, BETWEEN S. 12TH AND S. 13TH STREETS
PUBLIC HEARING: June 22, 2017

Members present: Campbell, Crump, Dionisopoulos, Nalow, Post and Searcy; Sinclair absent.

Jamison Wyatt stated he has done walking tours downtown related to Mari Sandoz and her historical presence here in Lincoln. There are many sites associated with her in Lincoln. This site used to be an old Victorian apartment house. She lived at 1226 J Street from 1925 to 1937, beginning when she was a student at the University. She was involved with some publications

at the University Press. She quit everything and decided she was going to become a writer. After many unsuccessful attempts, she won a writing competition. She wrote *Old Jules* at this location on Lincoln Mall. The building was torn down in the late 1950's. She would also spend time on her front lawn writing. She was a big fan of the Capitol building. She followed the construction closely. When she began working for the State Historical Society, she received a letter announcing she had won a writing competition. She became a successful writer. She went on to write countless other short stories and novels. They would like a historical marker on the north side of Lincoln Mall, between S. 12th and S. 13th Streets. They have had conversations with the Historical Society.

Ed Zimmer thinks this is the proper first step. The guidelines speak to markers and memorials. Sandoz would rank among the Centennial Mall honorees and has a plaque in the Spirit of Nebraska Pathway as an enrollee in the Nebraska Hall of Fame. The proposed marker is attached to a very specific place. This will need to be approved by Public Works & Utilities as well for placement in the public right-of-way. This will be cast aluminum. He would recommend its approval.

Crump questioned if there is any difference between this location and Shurtleff Arms, a surviving building where she later lived. Wyatt indicated that this is where she developed her craft and watched the Capitol construction.

Campbell wondered about the orientation of the sign. Wyatt responded that the placement is subject to change. He is not exactly sure. It would be toward the east edge of the insurance building. They can always come back with the exact location.

Mike Smith noted this is proposed as a two sided sign. For the second side, he believes they would want it to be focused towards pedestrians. Wyatt noted that with the four historical markers already in the Capitol Environs District, two of them are in the right-of-way. Smith added that the marker would be paid for by the Mari Sandoz Society. The State Marker program has been successful. It has done well and it is well appreciated by the public. He believes this is a good way to talk about the place. She is a well-known writer and extremely important Nebraskan.

Searcy noted that Mike Smith was quite integral in the State Historical Marker program. He wondered how many markers come on line each year. Smith replied that there are about five to seven a year. There are around 500 overall. This is a great program in any state. Ours is one of the more active states in this regard.

Ripley believes this is a great program. Sandoz is a great presence in Nebraska. It will add to the importance of the district. He is delighted with the idea.

Searcy believes there is significance and reason for the proposed spot. It is a fitting and beautiful setting. The signs always look excellent.

Matt Hansen pointed out that Old Jules is required reading in schools around the country. He believes it is an appropriate location as well.

Lynn Johnson agreed. It is appropriate that this location has a view of the Capitol.

ACTION:

Crump moved approval of a Certificate of Appropriateness for the installation of a marker as presented, seconded by Nalow and carried 6-0: Campbell, Crump, Dionisopoulos, Nalow, Post and Searcy voting 'yes'; Sinclair absent.

MISCELLANEOUS:

- Standing Bear sculpture

Zimmer wanted to update Commissioners on the progress of the Chief Standing Bear statue. The sculptor has finished the clay model. His studio is a former auto repair facility on the Boise campus. He has done some intricate work on the hair and moccasins, along with the rest of the statue. They did the molding process in Boise. It consists of many molds. Once cast in bronze, the pieces will all be welded together. The artist will tool all the welds and apply the patina. It will come here in September, 2017.

Hansen questioned if it has been poured yet. Zimmer is unaware. They have been getting regular reports and haven't heard yet. He would imagine it is in process. It is progressing quite well.

Zimmer continued that the artist has also produced a few maquettes. They aren't identical to the finished product. They are part of his working process. He believes the Ponca Tribe has commissioned a second casting of the full size for their headquarters.

Ripley inquired if there will be any castings of the maquette sizes. Zimmer believes so. Campbell questioned if that would be through the Parks Dept. Zimmer believes it would go through the Parks Foundation. He believes the artist has a lot of experience with marketing his maquettes. He reports that his western and native theme ones do very well.

Crump wanted to know how tall the statue and the wall are. Nalow replied the bronze is nine and a half feet tall, head to toe. The granite base will be about 18 inches. The existing wall is ten feet and another four feet are being added to the top. The wall will be a couple feet taller than the statue. Crump inquired if the wall addition will be the same material. Nalow replied that the upper addition will be veneered in dark granite so it looks purposeful. There will be an inscription on the upper portion.

Johnson mentioned that the dedication is set for Tuesday, September 19, 2017 at 5:30 p.m. [NOTE: The dedication is being rescheduled in October.] There will be a granite panel that recognizes the artist. The placement is still being decided on.

Searcy stated this will be awesome, just in time for the Sesquicentennial celebration. There will also be a dedication of the courtyard fountains on September 22, 2017. Ripley stated that after the dedication ceremony of the courtyard fountains, there will be events. Perhaps the Capitol could be opened later that day. This would dovetail with the Nebraska Homecoming week. The Sesquicentennial organizations will be conducting events as well. Searcy noted it will be a great week, drawing more attention to the revitalization of Centennial Mall. He offered a great deal of thanks to everyone who played a part.

- Nebraska State Capitol

Campbell has a longstanding concern of security at the Capitol. She questioned if there will ever be real security at the Capitol. Ripley assumes she is talking metal detectors. He hopes not. There are a few reasons. The Capitol Security Force is now an arm of the State Patrol. Twelve officers are now a part of the force. There are numerous cameras around the area. There has been a considerable effort and expense to enhance the security around the Capitol. The communications system has been enhanced. There is a balance between having security and attempting to keep the building looking like it is open to the public. He is unsure if this will remain forever. Efforts are being made to balance availability and security. There are some things that need to happen. There is conflict with state laws in addition to physical barriers.

Crump noted that when he was at the Capitol, it was open to everyone. He wondered if the elevators could be restricted with key access or something. Ripley replied that the elevators were renovated some years ago. There are levels with public access. There are levels that need a card access. Security has the tools to control access as well. There are enhancements happening all the time. There was a briefing by Homeland Security.

Crump would like an update on filling the fountains at the Capitol. Ripley replied they have had water since last Tuesday. They want to make sure they are running the way they want. It is a system that has to get up and running.

Hansen is curious now that construction on Centennial Mall is wrapping up, he wondered about the signal arms. J.J. Yost replied there are still funds in the remaining budget. It just hasn't moved forward yet. Hansen inquired if this would be done before the Sesquicentennial. Yost doesn't believe so. There is a lead time on the special poles. He believes it would be after the event. Searcy thinks this is encouraging to hear.

Ripley wanted to give a heads up on a future project at the State Capitol. A new heating venting and air conditioning facility is due to be started in 2018. Upgrades to the Capitol building will be done in five phases with about 14 to 16 months per phase. The tower will be the fifth and final phase. This whole system is driven by a chilled water system from the University. This is located a little over a mile to the north. They will be sinking their own geothermal well field on what is today a parking lot owned by the State. The entire block will house a geothermal well field of some 300 wells. They are quite deep. This is a closed loop system and disburse the heat. The block is K St. to L St., 17th St. to 18th St. The wells at this point will go to about 500 feet. When you have a limited amount of geography, you have to go deeper. The well field will run along K Street and enter the Capitol on the east side. The system will be great fun to do. It will give them a far more green and sustainable form of energy in the years to come. The current equipment in the Capitol is 50 years old. When the new equipment is installed, the well field will still be as good in the future. It will feed a second generation of equipment and could possibly feed a third generation as well. In addition to installing the wells, they will be putting in footings for a future parking structure on top of the site. State revenue being what it is, this is a longer term project.

We are going to have to accommodate the contractor and all the phases of work. Construction yards were created on the Capitol in the past. This created some security problems. On the south side of the Capitol, there are places that were excavated under the Capitol. One of those sides will be enlarged to accommodate some large vehicles and equipment of the contractor. The best option is to use shipping containers for additional storage. He is unsure if the larger or smaller ones would be used. They would need to be stored off site from the Capitol. Because they are taking away a parking lot, they will be compounding the parking problem in the area.

There are a couple of sites which are State owned lots. The D lot at 17th St. and J St. is a surface lot. This is an option for the storage containers. Another option is along the alley of 17th St. and 18th St. This is also a place that is being considered. He wanted the commission to not be surprised. If there are concerns, he wanted to notify everyone well in advance.

Once the well field is done, they will pave it and turn it back into a parking lot. When funding is available, it will be turned into a parking structure. There is a great deal of interest to see a long term parking problem solved. They are waiting to see how much off-site storage is needed and will keep the commission updated. This is an eight year project. There are a lot of things being looked at. They have the same consultant doing the HVAC project that is currently doing the courtyards.

Searcy questioned if areas outside the Capitol campus have been explored. Ripley responded that the construction company would not want to truck in their equipment from a further site. They are doing what they can to maximize everything internally. Physical access and proximity doesn't allow for the contractor to truck everything in from a mile or two away. Hansen noted that as the quadrants are being worked, the state workers will be displaced as well. Ripley

stated it will be a very busy time. These projects are in addition to the daily projects of the Building Division.

Searcy appreciates the information. He reminded everyone that September 19, 2017 is the dedication of the Chief Standing Bear statue at 5:30 p.m. [To be rescheduled.] The new Capitol courtyard dedication is on September 22, 2017 at the State Capitol, along with the Salute to the Good Life Sesquicentennial Spectacular grand finale. There will also be events on Saturday, September 23, 2017 corresponding with University of Nebraska homecoming.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 9:10 a.m.

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